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1961/04/16

CU-91

Telegram from the Mission at the United Nations to the Department of State

New York, April 16, 1961 - 6 p.m.

2892.

FOR SECRETARY AND DULLES FROM STEVENSON.

1. GREATLY DISTURBED BY CLEAR INDICATIONS RECEIVED DURING DAY IN PROCESS DEVELOPING REBUTAL MATERIAL THAT BOMBING INCIDENTS IN CUBA ON SATURDAY WERE LAUNCHED IN PART AT LEAST FROM OUTSIDE CUBA.
2. I HAD DEFINITE IMPRESSION FROM BARNES WHEN HE WAS HERE THAT NO ACTION WOULD BE TAKEN WHICH COULD GIVE US POLITICAL DIFFICULTY DURING CURRENT UN DEBATE. THIS RAID, IF SUCH IT WAS, IF EXPOSED WILL GRAVELY ALTER WHOLE ATMOSPHERE IN GA. IF CUBA NOW PROVES ANY OF PLANES AND PILOTS CAME FROM OUTSIDE WE WILL FACE INCREASINGLY HOSTILE ATMOSPHERE. NO ONE WILL BELIEVE THAT BOMBING ATTACKS ON CUBA FROM OUTSIDE COULD HAVE BEEN ORGANIZED WITHOUT OUR COMPLICITY.
3. I DO NOT UNDERSTAND HOW WE COULD LET SUCH ATTACK TAKE PLACE TWO DAYS BEFORE DEBATE ON CUBAN ISSUE IN GA. NOR CAN I UNDERSTAND IF WE COULD NOT PREVENT SUCH OUTSIDE ATTACK FROM TAKING PLACE AT THIS TIME WHY I COULD NOT HAVE BEEN WARNED AND PROVIDED PRE-PREPARED MATERIAL WITH WHICH TO DEFEND US. ANSWERS I MADE TO BOA'S STATEMENTS ABOUT INCIDENT ON SATURDAY WERE HASTILY CONCOCTED IN DEPARTMENT, AND REVISED BY ME AT LAST MINUTE ON ASSUMPTION THIS WAS CLEAR CASE OF ATTACKS BY DEFECTORS INSIDE CUBA.
4. THERE IS GRAVEST RISK OF ANOTHER 11-2 DISASTER IN SUCH UNCOORDINATED ACTION.

Source: Department of State, Central Files,

611.37/4-1661. Top Secret; Priority; Eyes Only. The outgoing copy of this telegram, in the files of USUN, indicates that it was drafted in the Mission by Richard F. Pedersen. (USUN Files: NY 84-84-002, Outgoing Tels 1962 (TS, EXDIS, etc))

Stevenson was unaware of the planning for an operation against Cuba until several days before the invasion occurred. At that point, he was briefed, in general terms, by Arthur Schlesinger, Tracy Barnes, Harlan Cleveland, and William Bowdler, in a special meeting called for that purpose at the Mission in New York. (Memorandum on Cuba, April 1961, Stevenson Papers, Emb - Box 2, Cuba)

611.37/4-1661
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